

A

# REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE BRITISH NATION.

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Saturday, February 18. 1710.

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IT is not often that I have taken upon me to talk in the first Person to the High Gentlemen, they are dangerous Folks to be so free with, as I find needful; but who can help speaking to them, their Behaviour at this Time is so particular and remarkable, who can avoid admonishing them a little?

At the first Questioning Dr. Sacheverell before the *House of Commons*, the Insolence and Fury of the Party was extravagantly great, the Doctrine preach'd by *Sacheverell* was nothing but Truth, and the whole Nation would stand by it, and the *House* dur'd not to go on with it.—And indeed they acted in all Company, as if their Party was too considerable in *England* to be at-

tack'd, even by the *House of Commons*.—But this first Heat began too cool, when they found the *House* in earnest; that they impeach'd the *Doctor*, refus'd him Bail, and prepar'd their Articles.—

As soon as these Articles were exhibited, and the *Doctor* had Time given to make his Answer, the *Houses* going on upon other Business.—The Gentlemen spread about a new Fiction of their own, *Viz.* That the *House* had only made a Bluster, that it was a Heat and would cool again, that the moderate Gentlemen of the Church of *England* began to repent falling upon the Church with such Fury, that they saw it only gratify'd the Phanaticks, and encourag'd the Enemies of the Church; and that they saw,

Dr.

Dr. Sacheverell would stand by his Principles, and the Question would become a Religious Debate, rather than a Civil, and so we should hear no more of it; the House would drop the Thing, and we should have no Trial of it.

I could enlarge on the Reasons, the Gentlemen of the Clergy gave for this, and which they carefully spread over the Countries; such as, That the Charges could not be maintain'd, that the Doctrine of Non-Resistance was own'd to be the Doctrine of the Church of England, that the Homilies were full of it, the Bishops had preach'd it, and their Writings testify'd against them; and some other Things more invidious than this. But this is not at present the Equity— That there was the common Report and the powerful Argument of the Party, I appeal to the universal Knowledge of All that converse with the World at this time— While we were at this Pass, the Fame of Dr. Sacheverell spreads over the whole Country, and his Health becomes the general Toast of the Party to such a Degree that he, that would not pledge it, was to expect the Wine in his Face, perhaps Glass and all— But this is the Day of these Gentlemen's Mortification; and when Mr. Dyer in his News-Letter inform'd them, that Seymour, Pile, and Others were taken up for Drinking the Doctor's Health; whether true or false was not the Matter, but they appear'd very much disgusted and dejected at that Part, as a Cheque to their former Fury, and a Blow to their whole Party.

But how Thunder-struck are you now, Gentlemen, when you see the Vote of the House for a Replication, and that the Commons are careful to avoid any Imputation of Delay, and call the Prosecution a Matter of Importance— Really, Gentlemen, now you may see your Folly, and that the House of Commons are not afraid or ashamed to pursue this False Brother— Now you will see, they resolv'd to push the Question to a fair Decision, and that they will All be present at this Trial of Skill, and the whole Commons of Britain will prosecute it.

And now, Gentlemen, shall I take the Freedom to tell you a little, what is to be

done at this Trial of Dr. Sacheverell, that you may see what you have been doing, and what you are to expect?

1. Gentlemen, Here the Validity of the Revolution will be try'd, and the whole Body of the People of Britain will determine, Whether it was a legal, just Transaction, or a plain Rebellion against God and the King; for if it was against the Laws of God, upon any Pretence whatsoever, to take up Arms and resist the Prince, then was the Landing of the Prince of Orange, the Rising of the Nobility against King James, and the Queen then Princess of Denmark, and the Prince, the Bishop of L—, the Duke of M—, and Others going to join them at Nottingham, in refusing the Ordinance of God, and the worst Sort of Rebellion. And this will be try'd at the Lords Bar; Dr. Sacheverell Plaintiff in Behalf of Non-Resistance, the Commons of Britain Defendants in Behalf of the Revolution— And indeed it is very necessary, this Matter should come to a Decision— And that the Revolution be either damn'd and exploded, that we may all renounce and repent of it, or be recogniz'd and defended from the Reproaches of this abominable Party, and their Lunatick Tongues be friend'd for the future.

2. Here the present Constitution is to be try'd, and the Lords are to give Sentence upon it, whether Guilty or not Guilty; whether it be a Usurpation and Invasion of the Property of another, (Viz. James that would be the III.) or whether it is built upon the just Foundation of indisputable Right, supported not by Power merely, but by Law, and that Law protest'd by righteous Force. If these are our Foundations, then the Notions of Dr. Sacheverell must receive their Doom, be blasted by the Breath of Parliament, be exploded and condemn'd as fabulous and foolish, and we shall receive not a new Foundation, but a new and solemn Recognition of the Justness of our Constitution and Foundation from this solemn Occasion, such as we hope, no Insolence shall for the future dare to impeach.

3. Here

3. Here shall be try'd and determin'd a new Pretence, rais'd before, but reviv'd on this Occasion ; Viz. Whether Dr. Sacheverell be before his proper Judges in this Case, and whether the House of Peers are competent to judge, determine, and pass Sentence upon the Behaviour or Offences of the Clergy ; in which Case it will necessary follow, that a Title added peculiarly to the Church of England will be confirm'd or confuted, (Viz.) That it is, *The Church establish'd by Law.*

These are weighty Points, and will, I presume, be all try'd and determin'd in this great Transaction ; and indeed since these Doctrines are of late become the Subject of so much Strife and Contention among us, it seems necessary to bring them to an Issue, that this Strife and Contention may end also ; and that we may no more be disputing upon Fundamentals. Either Resistance is lawful, or it is not ; if it is not, and Dr. Sacheverell can prove it, then he must be acquitted, and our Constitution must sink ; we must pull down all the Fabrick of the Revolution, and all that is built upon it ; such as the trifling Things of the Protestant Succession, the Claim of Right, the Queen's Title de Jure, and a hundred such frivolous Affairs, about which we have so long perplex'd ourselves ; for it is evident, all these Things are establish'd upon the Doctrine of resisting Tyranny, and displacing Oppressors. — And upon this

antient Principle, that Government is ordain'd for the Good and Preservation of the Persons to be govern'd.

And really, would the Gentlemen reflect upon the just Necessity there is to bring these great Points to a Determination, they would never flatter themselves with the vain Supposition, that the House of Commons will not go on with the Prosecution of it.

I come now to observe the noble Distinction, which the Doctor has given us in his Answer, and in which he shews the Difference between the Act, Entitl'd, *An Act for exempting the Dissenters from the Penalty of certain Laws*, and the usual generally receiv'd Title given that Act, Viz. *The Act of Toleration* — I shall not go so far as to call this Equivocation *Jesuitical*, tho' if I should do so, it would not reflect upon Dr. Sacheverell at all ; Mr. Norris having given us much the same Observation of it before — But I shall in my next attempt a little to reconcile the seeming Difference, and prove, That the *Act for exempting the Dissenters from the Penalty of certain Laws*, is really an *Act of Toleration*, and nothing else ; and that therefore the Distinction of Dr. Sacheverell, or Mr. Norris either, is not just — What Stead the Pretence will stand him in, with Respect to the Form, I know not ; but that there is no Specifick Difference at all, will be very plain ; and the Party will have no Shelter from so scandalous a Shift.

## MISCELLANEA.

I am to say something to a new-fangled Argument about the Dearness of Books, being increas'd by the new Bill for preserving Property — Indeed if it were a just Argument, I see no more to be argued from it, than would be for levelling the Property of our Estates, Lands, and Freeholds ; for certainly Land would be cheaper, if every Man's Property was levell'd to Thieves and Robbers. And this is an excellent Argument for our Pyrate Booksellers,

Printers, and Binders, and I wonder they do not condescend to put it into Words at length, Viz. That they may be allow'd to destroy and level every Man's Property, that Books may be cheaper.

But what shall we say, if after all, Books shall not be cheaper by it, but on the contrary that Books should be much cheaper, when Mens Property to their own was secur'd, than they are now they lie expos'd to Piracy and Theft ? And this I shall demonstrate.